



Date: March 3, 2007

# Press Release

## **PRESIDENT DECLARES MAJOR DISASTER FOR ALABAMA**

WASHINGTON – The head of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) announced that federal disaster aid has been made available for the state of Alabama to supplement state and local recovery efforts in the area struck by severe storms and tornadoes on March 1, 2007.

FEMA Director David Paulison said the assistance was authorized under a major disaster declaration issued for the state by President Bush. The President's action makes federal funding available to affected individuals in Coffee County.

The assistance, to be coordinated by FEMA, can include grants to help pay for temporary housing, home repairs and other serious disaster-related expenses. Low-interest loans from the U.S. Small Business Administration also will be available to cover residential and business losses not fully compensated by insurance.

Paulison named Gracia Szczech as the Federal Coordinating Officer for federal recovery operations in the affected area. Szczech said that damage surveys are continuing in other areas, and more counties and additional forms of assistance may be designated after the assessments are fully completed in the affected areas.

The Agency said that residents and business owners who sustained losses in the designated counties can begin applying for assistance today by registering online at <http://www.fema.gov> or by calling 1-800-621-FEMA(3362) or 1-800-462-7585 (TTY) for the hearing and speech impaired. The toll-free telephone numbers will operate from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. EST 7 days a week.

*FEMA manages federal response and recovery efforts following any national incident, initiates mitigation activities and manages the National Flood Insurance Program. FEMA works closely with state and local emergency managers, law enforcement personnel, firefighters and other first responders. FEMA became part of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security on March 1, 2003.*

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